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PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION REPORT

SINO-INDIAN BORDER DEFENSES
CHUSHUL AREA

NPIC/R-10/63
February 1963

NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION CENTER

Declass Review by NIMA/DOD

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INTRODUCTION

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Excellent-quality TALENT photography of [REDACTED] has revealed details of military defenses and related support facilities in the vicinity of Chushul, India, in the Sino-Indian border region (Figure 1). The area covered

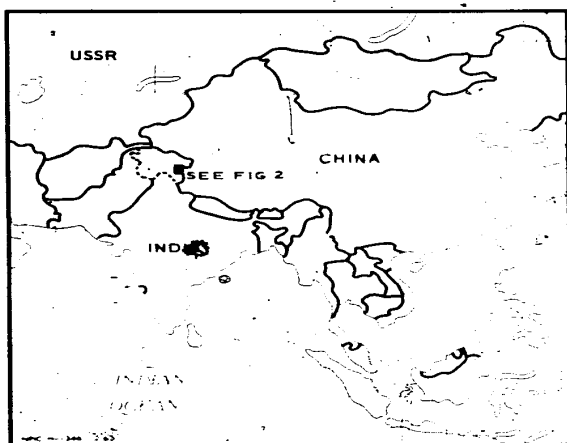


FIGURE 1. SINO-INDIAN BORDER REGION.

extends from 33-00N to 34-00N and from 78-15E to 79-15E and includes Indian, Chinese, and disputed territory. Determinations of Chinese or Indian occupancy of the defenses are based on the orientation of firing bays, trenches, and gun positions.

This report covers numerous military areas and installations observed (items 1-20 on Figure 2). Annotated photographs (Figures 3 through 14) illustrate the major items. Of special interest are a small Indian landing strip, the Indian mine field and Indian and Chinese strong-points at the west end of Spanggur Tso (Lake), and the absence of armored vehicles in the area. Although the general photographic quality is high, the obliquity of much of it and the presence of deep shadows in the mountainous terrain may preclude the identification of additional military installations, armored equipment, or roads. Geographic locations have been determined from available maps of this area, which are of only poor to fair reliability.

TWO INDIAN MILITARY CAMPS

(Item 1, Figure 2)

Camp A

Location--33-58N 78-23E, 35 nm northwest of Chushul.

Facilities--4 large, 2 medium, and 55 small tents; 6 probable storage buildings, one 4-gun AAA (antiaircraft-artillery) position (occupancy undetermined); 5 unoccupied AW (automatic-weapons) positions; numerous personnel positions; and approximately 6 vehicles.

Camp B

Location--33-58N 78-21E, 2 nm northwest of Camp A.

Facilities--2 large and 8 small tents, and 17 trucks.

PROBABLE CHINESE MILITARY POST

(Item 2, Figure 2)

Location--at Dambu Guru, 33-58N 78-55E, 25 nm northeast of Chushul.

Facilities--2 long barracks- or storage-type buildings and at least 9 smaller structures in a partially walled area.

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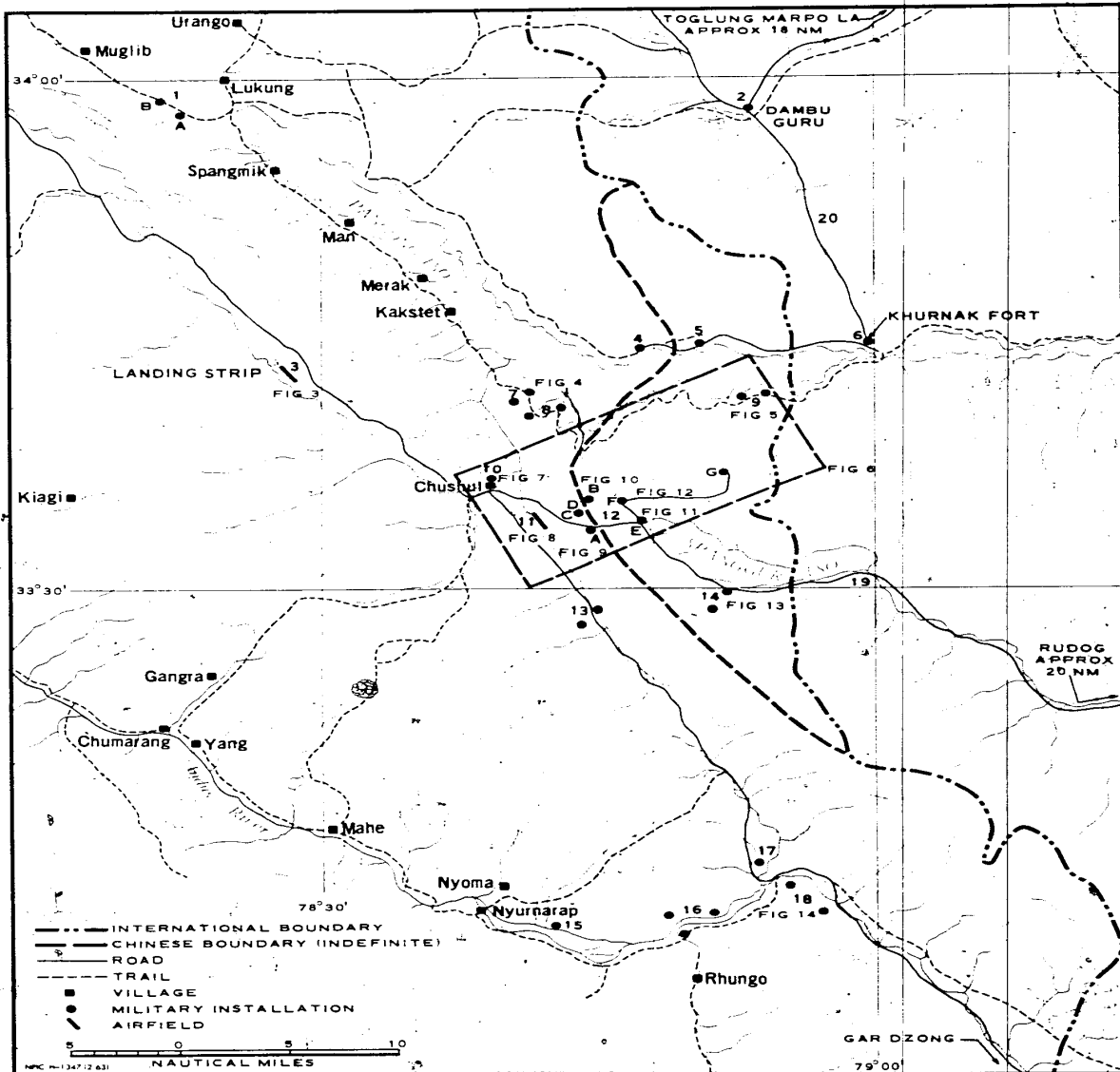


FIGURE 2. MILITARY AREAS AND INSTALLATIONS OBSERVED ON [REDACTED] PHOTOGRAPHY.

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INDIAN LANDING STRIP ✓

(Item 3, Figure 2; Figure 3)

Location--33-42N 78-28E, 12 nm north-west of Chushul, elevation, approximately 14,000 feet.

Facilities--Natural-surface, graded strip, 4,000 by 140 feet, served by a single-lane, natural-surface road. No navigation, POL, or closed storage facilities evident. One C-119 parked off the northern end of the strip. Defenses: three AW positions and several individual firing positions.

MILITARY STRONGPOINT (OCCUPANCY UNDETERMINED)

(Item 4, Figure 2)

Location--33-43N 78-48E, 11 nm north-east of Chushul, on the north shore of Pangong Tso.

Facilities--numerous positions and trenches on three ridges overlooking the lake, as follows:

On west ridge--trenches with several firing positions close to the lake, and a short trench with approximately six firing positions and one AW position higher on the ridge and to the north.

On center ridge--on the crest, a trench system with approximately nine firing bays encircling an AW position; at the base, numerous firing positions.

On east ridge, parallel to the lake, one AW position and two individual firing positions on the crest.

MILITARY STRONGPOINT (OCCUPANCY UNDETERMINED) ✓

(Item 5, Figure 2)

Location--33-44N 78-51E, 13 nm north-east of Chushul, on the north shore of Pangong Tso.

Facilities--trenches and positions in two areas.

Forward area, on a hill overlooking the lake--a trench system, six AW positions, and numerous individual firing pits.

Rear area, on higher ground--a trench system, five AW positions, numerous individual firing pits, and two vehicles.

KHURNAK FORT (CHINESE)

(Item 6, Figure 2)

Location--33-44N 78-59E, 20 nm north-east of Chushul, on the north shore of Pangong Tso.

Facilities--one large barracks-type building, 2 large storage-type buildings, and 9 smaller buildings; dry moat on three sides; six AW positions and several individual firing positions. Served by natural surface road; no vehicles observed.

INDIAN MILITARY STRONGPOINT

(Item 7, Figure 2; Figure 4)

Location--33-42N 78-42E, 5 nm north-northeast of Chushul, on the south shore of the Pangong Tso.

Facilities--large earth-covered command/observation post, 13 covered personnel shelters, 6 trenches containing a total of 9 AW positions; numerous individual firing positions dispersed throughout the area overlooking the lake and beaches; 2 small buildings, one tent, and a storage pit on the reverse slope at the base of the hill; considerable track activity. Served by a single-lane, natural-surface road. One 2-gun unoccupied AW position and a short trench approximately 2 nm southwest of the strongpoint.

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PROBABLE INDIAN MILITARY STRONGPOINT

(Item 8, Figure 2)

Location 33-40N 78-41E, 5 nm north-northeast of Chushul, on the south shore of Pangong Tso.

Facilities--trenches and positions on two ridges.

On west ridge--a long zigzag trench, 16 individual firing pits, 3 AW positions, and one covered AW position on the crest of the ridge; 21 individual firing pits at the base of the ridge.

On east ridge--a long trench with AW and individual firing positions, intersected at 90-degree angle by another trench with 11 field-artillery positions; 7 firing positions on an adjacent small ridge. All positions overlook and control fields of fire into a possible landing beach.

TWO PROBABLE CHINESE MILITARY STRONGPOINTS

(Item 9, Figure 2; Figure 5)

West Strongpoint

Location--33-35N 78-53E, 13 nm east-northeast of Chushul, on the south shore of Pangong Tso.

Facilities--one trench system on a mountain ridge with AW positions; 4 storage revetments and approximately 12 AW positions at the base of the mountain (Figure 5).

East Strongpoint

Location--33-42N 78-56E, 14 nm east-northeast of Chushul, on the south shore of Pangong Tso.

Facilities--two trench systems with firing and AW positions (shadow precludes detailed interpretation).

INDIAN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

IN CHUSHUL

(Item 10, Figure 2; Figures 6 and 7)

Location--33-36N 78-41E

Description--military installations concentrated in north, central, and south parts of town; trenches with covered and open AW positions and numerous individual firing positions dispersed throughout the central part of town on high ground and on the south edge of town, considerable track activity; area served by natural-surface roads.

North installation--a motor pool containing 3 large buildings, 4 large tents, and 21 vehicles.

Central installation--a partially walled motor pool containing 2 large tents and 17 vehicles; 6 large storage buildings; and one large administrative-type building.

South installation--a motor pool containing 2 small tents and 15 vehicles; a storage area containing 12 warehouse-type buildings; and 3 barracks areas with a total of 25 large buildings.

CHUSHUL AIRFIELD (INDIAN)

(Item 11, Figure 2; Figures 6 and 6)

Location--37-32N 78-41E, 5 nm southeast of Chushul; elevation, approximately 14,000 feet.

Description--runway 5,500 by 100 feet, oriented northwest-southeast, asphalt, overrun of 2,600 feet on the northwest and of 1,400 feet on the southeast. Navigational aid near the northwest end of the runway, a probable temporary control tower near the southeast end of the runway. Three storage areas containing material, equipment, and buildings used in improvement of the airfield. POL storage area near the northwest overrun, with six horizontal tanks in revetments. On the west side of the field,

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2 large H-shaped and 2 U-shaped barracks and 3 smaller buildings. On the east side, 3 U-shaped, 2 L-shaped, and 7 smaller buildings in one area; 4 U-shaped and one L-shaped barracks-type buildings and 5 small buildings in another area (with wire fencing on three sides). Field served by a natural-surface road. Extensive track activity.

Defenses--extensive trench system surrounding the field and numerous AW and field-artillery positions and individual firing pits.

INDIAN MINE FIELD AND INDIAN AND CHINESE MILITARY STRONGPOINTS

(Item 12, Figure 2; Figures 6, 9, 10, 11, and 12)

Location--33-34N 78-47E, approximately 5 nm east of Chushul Airfield and west of Spanggur Tso, in one of the best passes between China and India. Chinese-built improved single-lane road extends from Rudog through this pass to Chushul.

Indian Strongpoint

(Item 12A, Figure 9)

Located at south end of Indian mine field (item 12C). Consists of a trench on the east flank of a mountain spur, with firing positions facing east. One trench crosses the spur. On the west side of the spur are at least two firing positions consisting of a trench and a revetted placement, possibly for mortars. At least three double rows of mines and a wire fence protect the east approaches to the strongpoint.

Indian Strongpoint

(Item 12B, Figure 10)

Located at the north end of the Indian mine field. Consists of a trench on the south and east sides of the spur, with firing positions

facing south and east. At least four double rows of mines and a wire fence protect the south and east sides of the strongpoint.

Indian Mine Field

(Item 12C, Figures 9 and 10)

Located between the two strongpoints (items 12A and B). Consists of about 2,500 mines in four continuous double zigzag rows about 7,400 feet apart, with the mines staggered about 20 feet apart, and a fifth intermittent double row of mines.

Three Indian Strongpoints

(Item 12D, Figures 9 and 10)

Immediately west of mine field (item 12C), providing additional field of fire for protection of pass and mine field. Each consists of trench work and bunkered firing positions and bunkered personnel shelters; all three protected on the east side by a wire fence.

Other revetted firing positions, foxholes, and two small trenches are located along both sides of the pass between the mine field and Chushul Airfield. Numerous foxholes and firing positions are located on a ridge immediately behind item 12B, an Indian strongpoint.

Chinese Strongpoints

(Item 12E, Figure 11)

On the south side of the pass, approximately 9,000 feet east of the Indian mine field. Consist of extensive trench work, firing positions, at least six bunkers (some of which resemble small circular pillboxes), at least 12 buildings (some partially revetted), and numerous foxholes. Fenced on the east and north sides. The trench work and firing positions face Indian strongpoints. Tracks extend to a Chinese strongpoint (item F) on the north side of the pass. Three small trenches facing an

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Indian strongpoint (item 12A) are located 5,400 feet to the west.

Chinese Strongpoint (Item 12F, Figure 12)

On the north side of the pass, 4,500 feet east of the Indian mine field (item 12C) and an Indian strongpoint (item 12B). Consists of a trench on the south and west base of a mountain spur, and other trench work on the ridge of the spur. Trails to the trenches on the spur are on the east side, away from Indian positions.

From this strongpoint a double row of mines extends south for about 2,600 feet and ends about 1,500 feet short of the south side of the pass. Three probable mortar or gun positions are located on the east side of the spur. About 2,000 feet north of these are six firing positions. Tracks connect the strongpoint with the larger Chinese strongpoints (item 12E).

Chinese Strongpoint (Item 12G)

A trail extends generally east from item 12F and then north to this small Chinese strongpoint at approximately 33-37N 78-52E.

Facilities include a trench with two firing positions facing west. A zigzag trail leads east to excavations for six small buildings along the trail.

INDIAN MILITARY STRONGPOINT (Item 13, Figure 2)

Location--33-28N 78-44E, 9 nm south-east of Chushul, straddling the road between Chushul and Gar Dzong.

Facilities--numerous trenches, AW and field-artillery positions, covered personnel shelters, and individual firing points. Considerable track activity. West and northwest are a few tents and an open-storage area. Two trucks observed.

CHINESE MILITARY STRONGPOINT (Item 14, Figure 2; Figure 13)

Location 33-30N 78-51E, 13 nm south-east of Chushul, on the south shore of Spanggur Tso.

Facilities--Extensive trench system on a ridge, with individual firing points, covered and open AW positions (at least one of which resembles a circular pillbox), individual firing pits, and one large building. A wire fence bounds the area on three sides. A support area, at the base of the ridge on the east side, contains at least 2 tents, 2 revetted buildings (possibly for ammunition storage), and 2 bunkers. A 4-gun unoccupied position is nearby and 3 revetted and 2 covered storage positions are approximately 4,500 feet south of the strongpoint.

Along the same ridge approximately 3 nm of this strongpoint are one trench, four firing positions, and numerous foxholes.

PROBABLE INDIAN MILITARY CAMP (Item 15, Figure 2)

Location--33-10N 78-42E, 25 nm south of Chushul on the north bank of the Indus.

Facilities--Approximately 18 tents and 10 probable vehicles.

THREE PROBABLE INDIAN MILITARY CAMPS AND STRONGPOINT (Item 16, Figure 2)

Location--33-11N 78-48E, 26 nm south-southeast of Chushul.

Facilities--Three camps containing a total of approximately 27 tents, 18 probable vehicles, 2 four-gun occupied AW positions, several unoccupied AW positions, and unidentified material or equipment throughout the area, some of which is stored in revetted positions.

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PROBABLE INDIAN MILITARY CAMP AND STRONGPOINT (Item 17, Figure 2)

Location--33-15N 78-55E, 24 nm south-southeast of Chushul.

Facilities--approximately 15 tents, one storage-type building, one 4-gun unoccupied position, numerous personnel emplacements, and numerous circular revetted storage positions, (several occupied) and 7 vehicles.

PROBABLE INDIAN MILITARY BARRACKS AND STRONGPOINTS (Item 18, Figure 2)

Location--33-13N 78-57E, 30 nm south-east of Chushul.

Facilities--Approximately 18 barracks- or storage-type buildings, about 5 tents, four-

gun unoccupied AAA position, numerous AW and personnel positions, and 5 vehicles.

CHUSHUL-RUDOG ROAD (Item 19, Figure 2)

This Chinese-built road is a single-lane natural-surface improved road. It follows the south shore of Spanggur Tso and runs along the course of a stream valley to the east, and is not aligned as shown on maps of the area.

ROAD NORTH FROM KHURNAK FORT (Item 20, Figure 2)

This Chinese-built road, a single-lane, natural-surface road, was observed from 33-46N 78-59E near Khurnak Fort, to 34-02N 78-59E.

REFERENCES

PHOTOGRAPHY

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MAPS OR CHARTS

WAC. 432, 6th ed. Jun 58 (UNCLASSIFIED)
AMS. Series 1301, Sheet N1 44, Dec 62 (SECRET)
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RELATED DOCUMENTS

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REQUIREMENT

NPIC. PC 69/63 (partial answer)

NPIC PROJECT

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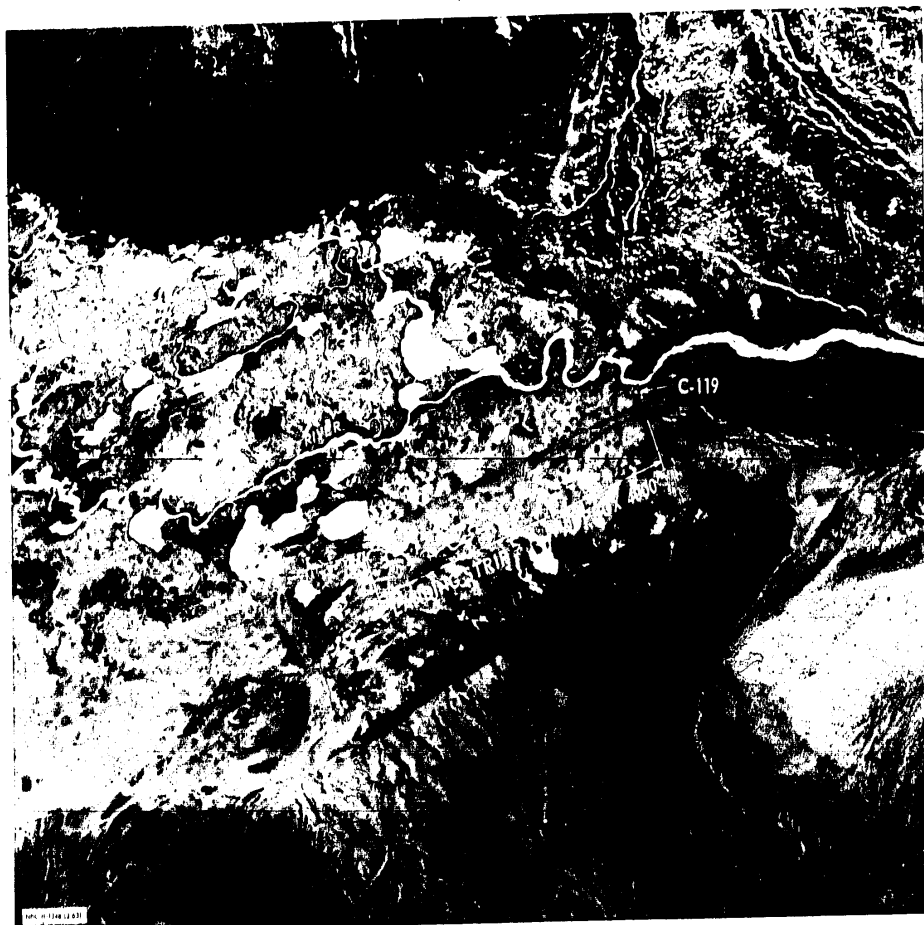


FIGURE 3. INDIAN LANDING STRIP -- ITEM 3

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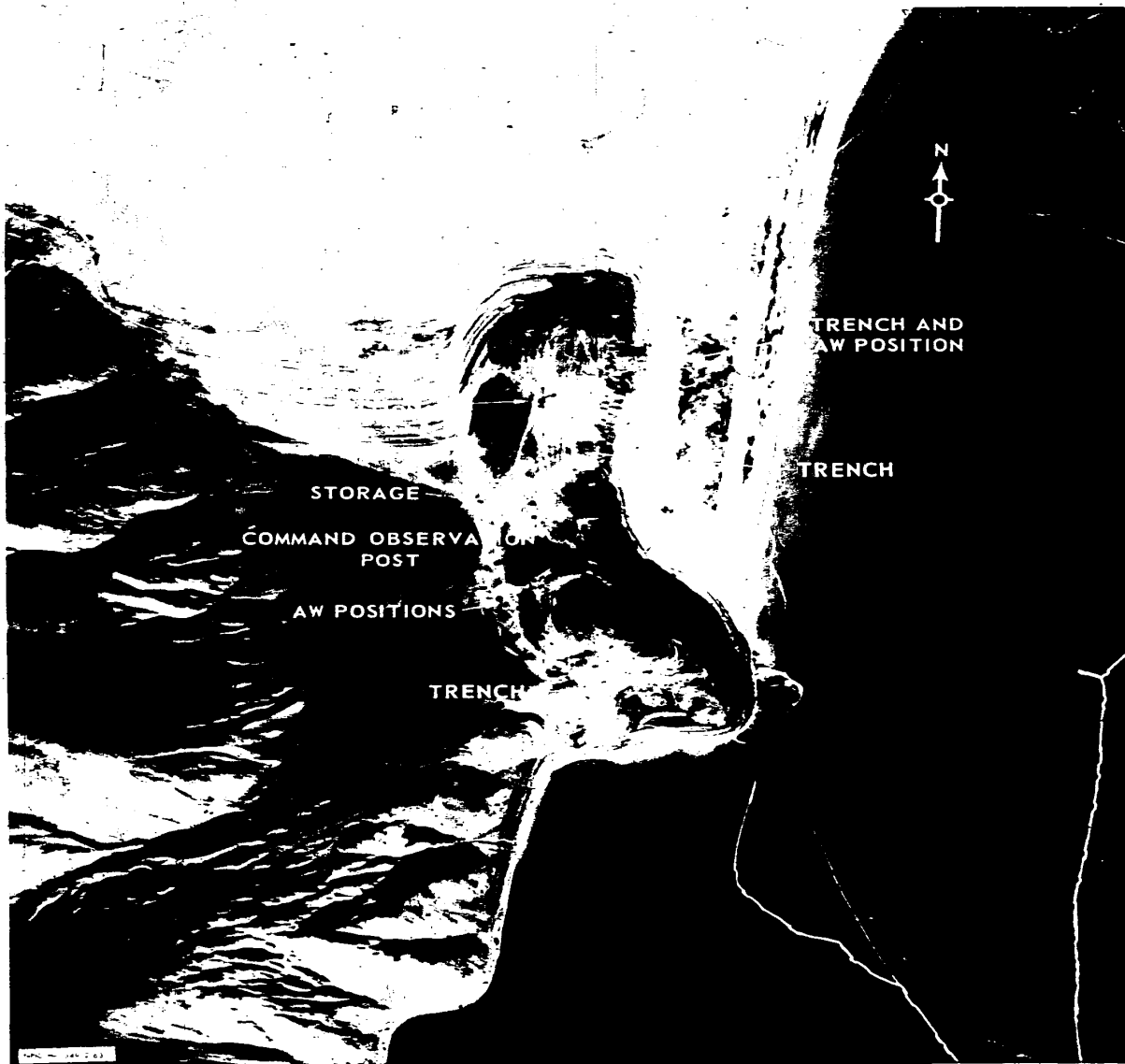


FIGURE 4. INDIAN MILITARY STRONGPOINT -- ITEM 7

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FIGURE 5. PROBABLE CHINESE MILITARY STRONGPOINTS -- ITEM 9

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FIGURE 7. INDIAN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN CHUSHUL

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FIGURE 8. CHUSHUL AIRFIELD

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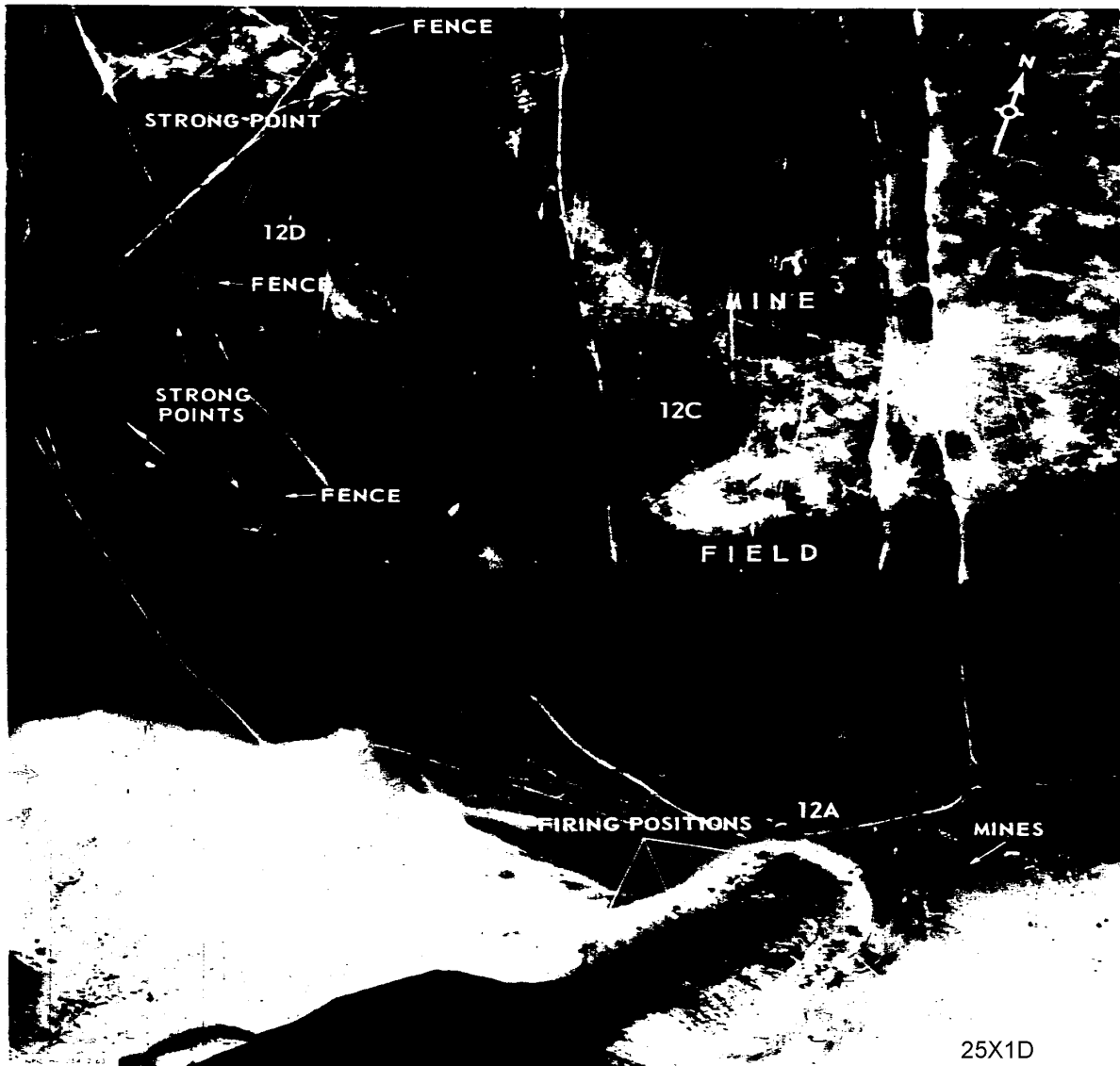


FIGURE 9. INDIAN MINE FIELD -- ITEM 12C, AND INDIAN MILITARY STRONGPOINTS -- ITEMS 12A AND 12D

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FIGURE 10. INDIAN MINE FIELD -- ITEM 12C, AND INDIAN MILITARY STRONGPOINTS -- ITEMS 12B AND 12D

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FIGURE 11. CHINESE MILITARY STRONGPOINT -- ITEM 12E

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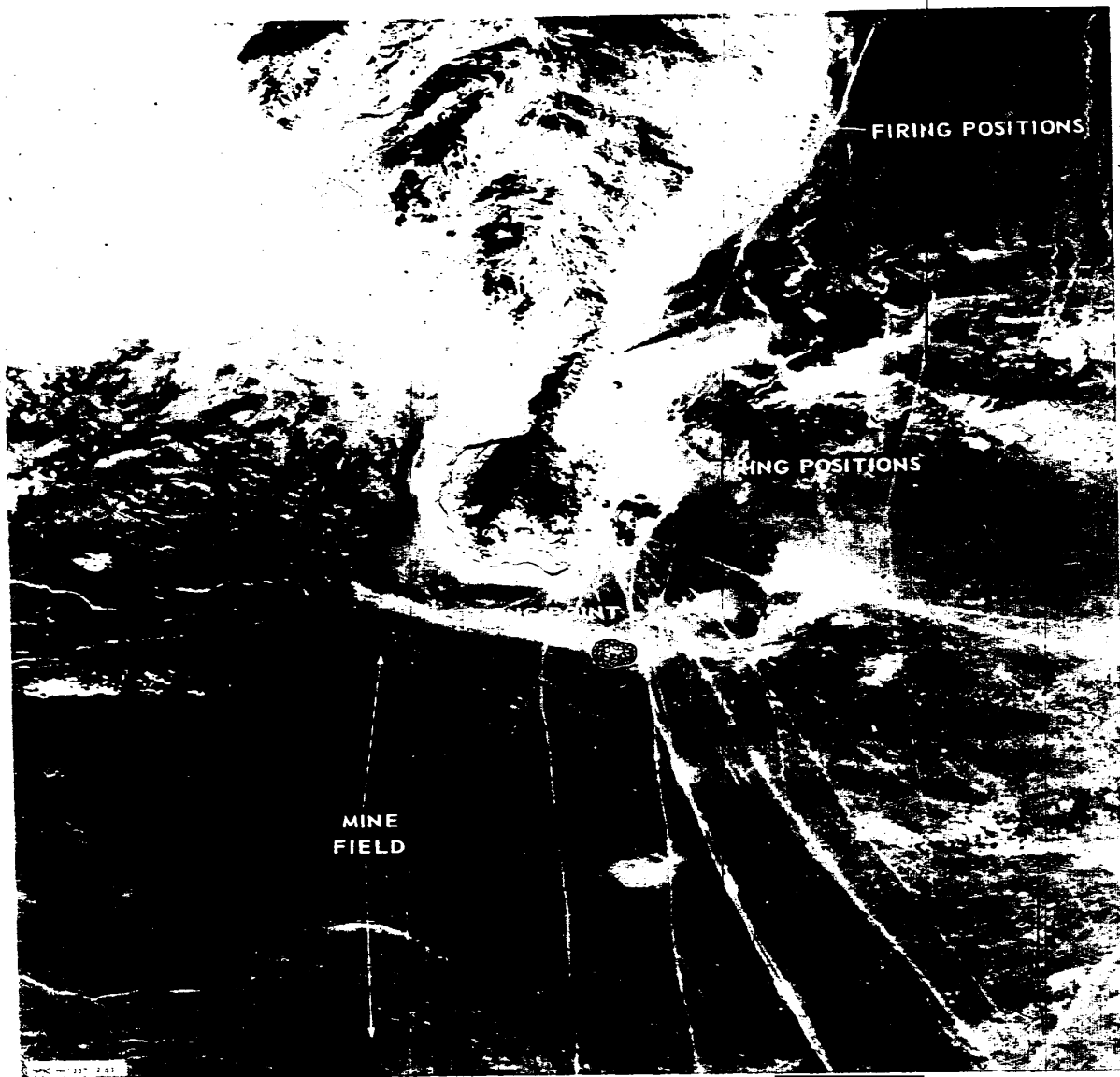


FIGURE 12. CHINESE MILITARY STRONGPOINT -- ITEM 12F

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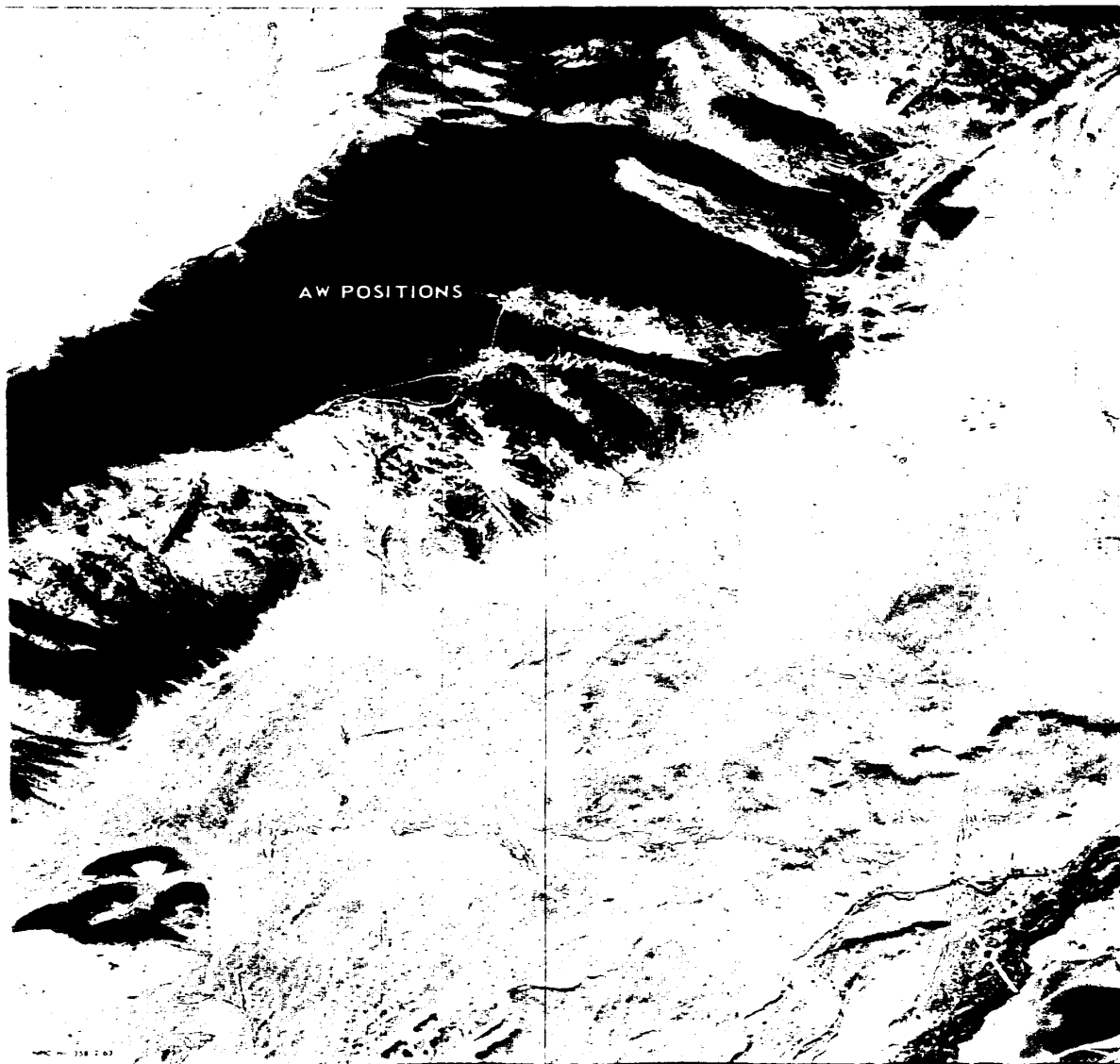


FIGURE 13. CHINESE MILITARY STRONGPOINT -- ITEM 14

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FIGURE 14. MILITARY BARRACKS AND STRONGPOINTS -- ITEM 18

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